

BELFAST BRUISER! doesn't beat the shit out of DOINK! MR AGUILA! is so the STUFF! AAA PUNKS! have a highspot bonanza! and other stuff!

ALOHA~!

WELCOME TO the DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #49! Golly! What a week! I got a zillion tapes from Doug, Pete, Glenn, Phil and Rob, and my better half was out of town for five days so I got to totally OD on the Sport of Kings- Pro Wrestling. I'm gonna break it up into this weeks and next weeks since the wife is back now and Out of Africa is on TNT and those Lifetime movies keep coming on so I get a big bowl of nothin' this week- wrestling-tape-watching-wise.

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$The BEST OF DAVE FIT FINLAY

Doug sent me this baby and golly! does it kick ass! It all from the 90's and from CWA so I'm not sure if its actually the Best of the Belfast Bruiser, but either way it's got some pretty choice stuff on it. The best match is Finlay vs Franz Schumann in an Irish Street Fight. This was real close to those beautiful matches he had against Regal in WCW in that in combined EVERYTHING and it was ALL done well- from the mat to the air to the floor. Schumann isn't afraid to take a mansized beating and that helps the proceedings. The Bruiser/Liger match is hurt by the round system and Finlay basically wrestles this New Japan Junior style which he is quite proficient at doing, but it doesn't hit the levels of awesomeness that his magnificent brawls can get to. It's sort of like Bruiser Brodie taking it to the mat- it's neat that he could do it, but it's not his bread and butter. He carries Wunderkind young punk, Ulf Hermann, to few watchable matches and his match against the legendary Tony St Clair is not as great as I figured it would be- after hearing all the things Regal was saying about St. Clair in his shoot interview. He isn't as good Regal or Finlay, though he is quite good- big and fast and willing to take a bump. The major letdown of the tape was the Finlay/Doink match where I wanted Finlay to beat the hell out of a wrestling clown. I mean JEEZUS! IT'S THE BELFAST FUCJKING BRUISER vs DOINK the CLOWN!! WOuldn't that get you a little antsy thinking about the fabulous ass-stomping that should ensue. I'm guessing Finlay is an old friend of Steve Kiern's or something because he sells way too much of Doink's very basic offense. I was hoping for a true ass-kicking but Finlay- the ultimate pro- made it a watchable wrestling match. I'd recommend the rest of it highly just for the cool style of wrestling the masters over there in CWA use. His match against Steve Wright (Alex's dad) is a good example, Wright is very graceful yet he works stiff as shit with Finaly and this match turns out to be one of the best on the tape despite the fact that Wright is ten hundred years old and is wearing pants that a chubby redneck chick would wear to an oyster festival. I can't figure out totally why it worked, so I need to see more of the style, because it was neat. It's all pretty cool and pretty stiff and very matbased. I want to get some older stuff and see where Johnny Saint's weird-ass wrestling style sprung out of- or was that all an elaborate joke to make Yakushiji sell some of the weirdest wrestling holds ever on earth. It's like a whole other world of wrestling with Schuman, Finlay, Regal, St.Clair and I want to see more of their style because it is pretty different than Japanese, mexican and US style wrestling. AND SHIT! I hear that Finlay is gonna be on Nitro on the 22nd. My heart skips a motherfucking beat.

&&&& AAA-TRIPLEMANIA V- 1997.

Pogo Pete- the King of men- sent me this baby and it actually ROCKS a lot of the time. It's not that it had any great five-star matches or anything but it was a big batch of goofy fun. The Mini-Goldust/Mini Mankind/Pentagoncito vs Cibernetico/Chavacito/Octagonsito match was about as fun as a mini's match gets- hell! it had a midget dressed as a goat playing soccer and a mini of Goldust that had to be five-ten (Okay maybe not that big, but definately over the SuperAstro limit. It was Jerrito Estrada and I swear it took me forever to tell him and Jerry Estrada apart when I first started getting tapes of Lucha) I love watching Cibernetico's mini doing twenty moves that his larger counterpart could only dream of. Pentagoncito and Octagoncito tear it up like their maxi's used to do before they started to really suck- hitting fabulous armdrags into topes or planchas at will. The little goatboy was really good and he was about two feet shorter than SmallerGoldust. He does this thing where he butts his opponent- LIKE HE IS A GOAT! I fell out. He did a fabulous flying cross-body block from the turnbuckle to the floor that was really neat, though it would have been someone dropping a bag of onions on your head... or something. Anyway, he rules, they rule, minis rule, RULE. Mini Mankind rounded out the cast.

The Venum/Chivas Rayadas I and II (them big Soccer Goats) vs Histeria/Mosco/the guy in the kickass Gene Simmons get-up RULED! It was not an actually good match in a classic Lucha sense of the words, but HELL! it's the young punks who are out to kill themselves and this was highspot city 97, and I liked it. Venum is so INSANE- the pinnacle being the psychotic tope into NOTHING. Histeria steps aside and it's 100% floor. DOH! On the rudo side, Histeria is smoked by Mosco in that Mosco is gonna be the real shit in a few years. He's so graceful yet so filled with force- he goes from beautiful overhand armdrag into a great stiff spinning kick with real ease, all he needs is the ability to do some actual wrestling like a great luchadore can do. The Chivas have become really good since last I saw them- they are all dynamic and flashy now and shit- which is hard to pull off when dressed in such a ridiculous get-up. One of the Chivas did a GREAT middle of the toprope moonsault to the floor and one of them did a ringpost plancha that made me weep with its grace and beauty. Histeria does his Psicosis impersonation pretty well but he isn't 1/5 the wrestler that Psicosis is so it's REALLY not the same. This match had lots of spectacular spots and not all of them were to the floor. Venum's best move was a springboard half-moonsault into a twisting rana which made me go, "SHHHHEEEEEIIIIITTT!" He also hit a boss moonsault to the floor. Mosco did a vicious senton to from the top to the floor and the triple toprope Tope suicida always gets me stoked- especially when preceded by three sequential Jerry Estrada Bumps to set it up. They blow the big finish of the Chiva plancha flying over the other Chiva's tope to bookend Venum's Flying Space Tiger Drop because Venum get's tangled up in the ropes and Histeria has to pull him on to himself. All in all, a big batch of mindless fun and I was digging it. The Gene Simmons guy (Discovery? Boomerang? A random former Power Raider?) kicked ass, but in a quiet way.

The other match of note was the Sangre Chicano vs Heavy Metal match where HM bleeds like a stuck pig and then goes into the audience (HEY MA! I got Hepatitis B from Heavy Metal at Triplemania V! WHIP ASS!) This was a whole lot of brawling and not a whole lot else. The

gargantuan batch of blood is worth mentioning. Sooo...there you have it. GET THIS FOR THE TWO SPOTFESTS AND THERE IS ANOTHER OKAY 8-MAN that I recognized nobody in WHICH WAS PRETTY OKAY.

#####THE BEST OF DICK MURDOCK

Doug sent me this baby and it was really great. It posed some hard questions though. I know that Murdock went to New Japan and became a top foreigner and saved their bacon in the early to mid eighties, and the matches from Japan on this match are the best on this tape. As I watch him have a great match with Tatsumi Fujinami and REALLY great match against Bruiser Brodie, I wonder if he had stayed in Japan like Stan Hansen had, instead of going back to the states and becoming Captain Redneck and future HardLiner, would Dick Murdock have developed into one of the greatest of all-time? I think the evidence is there. He had the size, he could really go when motivated, he worked as stiff as those guys and God knows he would have had the best opponents of his career. I guess Japan didn't have Coors longnecks and rodeos so it wasn't meant to be. His best stuff from the states is against fellow brawlers. There is a good match against Harley Race, he makes a Duggan match watchable from Mid-South, and he drags a decent fight out of Kendo Nagasaki in Mid-Atlantic. This tape shows a side of Murdock that people forget- that he wasn't a bad wrestler when given the opportunity. As a Murdock fan since age three (1969- Texas), it may have been the sentimental side of me talking.

@@@@@ EMLL TV FROM JUNE AND JULY

I'm gonna hit on various things I saw on these two tapes from Pete. First off, Mr. Aguila is gonna be SOOOOO good to two years. He's in four matches on these tapes and I just watched his CMLL Champ Forum match (GLENN!) from EMLL summer tour of Japan and GOD! is this guy awesome already. There is no way he has only been wrestling for four months. He adds new meaning to psychotic- yet he has the grace to be a great one when the knees give out. Now- if he can start getting that Lucha mat stuff down, he will join the upper echelon of Shocker, Black Warrior, and Mr. Niebla as the future of Lucha Libre for EMLL. Of course if he kills himself like he did in one Cadaver Ultratumbo-intensive match- wherein he tries a springboard shooting star press and lands directly on his neck, it may be over before it begins. I watched a Shocker match where he didn't try to fuse his head to a chair in the third row with an insane tope and I loved it just as much. I watched another match where Shocker actually knocks down a TV light with his feet as he gets too much lift in his legs as he topes into one of the THOROUGHLY useless HeadHunters. ArkAngel is becoming the fabulous rudo that he showed hints of earlier in his career. His new mask comes close to justifying the rest of his hideous outfit.

The TAKA matches are neat, as he is shooting to become Ultimo Dragon-esque- in that he is getting over in Mexico as a face who sells way too much for Satanico. They haven't turned him loose against the fellow insane high-flyers which is interesting because it means he has to take it to the mat with the old guys, which is actually pretty good. HELL! TAKA in with SilverKing is worth the price of admission alone! That is just a fat-ass batch of wrestling awesomeness going at it. TAKA seems so desperate and revitalized in Mexico and it really shows. He is getting into

the style and it shows. He carries Satanico's old ass to a neat sequence and even submits to Satanico's most preposterous submission hold- which had to have the boys at Pancrase snickering. TAKA is pretty subdued in the highflying department, instead he is staying with the flow of the Lucha, being really good at adapting to the style and giving a whole lot to the older guys. When he unleashes a springboard plancha it pops out at you like it never does in Japan. Welcome to Mexican psychology. TAKA RULES THE FUCKING WORLD. GET ALL THIS!

NEXT WEEK: LUCHA! LUCHA! LUCHAPAN! RINGS! GAEA! NEW JAPAN! GAEA! LUCHA! MISAWA BUSTS UP KAWADA IN 94! FEEL THE LOVE!

NANIWA~!

Dean Rasmussen, feeling the love for Sakai the J'd Judo girl.